DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 747 HE 022 128

AUTHOR	Green, Madeline F.; And Others
TITLE	The American College President: A Contemporary Profile.
INSTITUTION	American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-8268-1307-1
PUB DATE	Apr 88
NOTE	46p.; Development support provided by the AT&T Foundation.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Presidents' Study, Center for Leadership Development, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036-1193 ($10.00 members; $12.50 nonmembers).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Statistical Data (110) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Blacks; Career Development; College Administration; *College Presidents; Cultural Background; Demography; *Educational Background; Females; Higher Education; Individual Characteristics; Individual Development; Leadership; Minority Groups; *Socioeconomic Background

ABSTRACT

A profile of the personal and educational backgrounds of college and university presidents is presented in order to provide a basis for future studies. Eight sections focus on: the study; personal characteristics about the presidents (sex, race and ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, and spouse's employment); academic background (highest degree and field of study); career paths (first and second positions before the presidency, institutional mobility, and length of tenure); presidents and the board; summary profile of women presidents (coeducational institutions and women's colleges); summary profile of black presidents (predominantly white institutions and historically or predominantly black institutions); and summary and conclusions (confirming the conventional wisdom and future studies). Highlights include the following: the typical college president was white, male, married, and 53 years old; the average president had served for nearly 7 years; most college presidents were married, but women presidents were far more likely than men to be divorced or never married; husbands of college presidents were twice as likely to be employed as wives; more than three quarters of all presidents held doctorate degrees; most presidents had substantial administrative experience; and most career movement occurred within the same type of institution. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE PRESIDENT

A Contemporary Profile

Madeleine F. Green

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Center for Leadership Development
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Madeleine F. Green

~~American Council on~~ Education

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HE 022 128

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Additional copies of THE AMERICAN COLLEGE PRESIDENT: A CONTEMPORARY PROFILE are available from:

National Presidents' Study
Center for Leadership Development
American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036-1193

Charges for copies are as follows:

ACE Member—$10.00 per copy

ACE Non-member—$12.50 per copy

All orders must be prepaid by check or money order payable to the American Council on Education.

Copyright ©1988 American Council on Education
ISBN 0-8268-1307-1

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
Robert H. Atwell, *President*

The American Council on Education, founded in 1918, is a major national association serving higher education.

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE PRESIDENT

A Contemporary Profile

Madeleine F. Green
assisted by
Marlene Ross
Engin Holmstrom

April 1988

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
Washington, D. C.

The American Council on Education gratefully acknowledges the support of the AT&T Foundation in the development of this report.

Acknowledgements

Many individuals at the American Council on Education were instrumental in producing this report. The patient efforts of Boichi San and Laurent Ross were central to the success of the data analysis. Marlene Ross shepherded the entire effort from the questionnaire to the analysis phase, and unraveled countless knots along the way. Engin Holmstrom's analytical expertise was central to the development of the final report.

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	iv
Highlights	v
The Study	1
Purpose of the Study	1
A Note on Previous Studies	2
Survey Design and Responses	3
Personal Characteristics: Who are the Presidents?	4
Sex	4
Race and Ethnicity	5
Age	7
Religion	7
Marital Status	8
Spouse's Employment	9
Academic Background	11
Highest Degree	11
Field of Study	13
Career Paths: Routes to the Presidency	15
First Position Before the Presidency	15
Second Position Before the Presidency	16
Institutional Mobility	18
Length of Tenure	20
Presidents and the Board	22
Summary Profile of Women Presidents	23
Coeducational Institutions and Women's Colleges	23
Race and Ethnicity	23
Marital Status	24
Highest Degree	24
Career Paths	25
Institutional Mobility	26
Summary Profile of Black Presidents	27
Predominantly White Institutions and Historically or Predominantly Black Institutions	27
Personal Characteristics and Academic Background	27
Institutional Mobility	27
Summary and Conclusion	29
Confirming the Conventional Wisdom	29
Affirmative Action	30
The President and Spouse	30
Non-academic Presidents	31
Institutional Mobility	31
Future Studies: Annual Updates	32
Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire	35

List of Tables

		Page
Table 1.	Number, Distribution, and Response Rates of Higher Education Institutions in Universe and Study Populations	3
Table 2.	Presidents' Sex by Type of Institution	4
Table 3.	Presidents' Sex by Race/Ethnicity	5
Table 4.	Presidents' Race/Ethnicity by Type of Institution	6
Table 5.	Presidents' Median Ages by Sex	7
Table 6.	Presidents' Median Ages by Race/Ethnicity	7
Table 7.	Presidents' Religion by Sex	7
Table 8.	Presidents' Religion by Race/Ethnicity	8
Table 9.	Spouses' Employment Status by Sex	9
Table 10.	Presidents' Highest Degrees by Sex	11
Table 11.	Presidents' Highest Degrees by Race/Ethnicity	11
Table 12.	Presidents' Highest Degrees by Type of Institution	12
Table 13.	Presidents' Fields of Study by Sex	13
Table 14.	Presidents' Fields of Study by Race/Ethnicity	13
Table 15.	Presidents' Fields of Study by Type of Institution	14
Table 16.	Presidents' Prior Positions by Sex and Race/Ethnicity	15
Table 17.	Presidents' Prior Positions by Type of Institution	16
Table 18.	Presidents' Second Prior Positions by Sex and Race/Ethnicity	17
Table 19.	Presidents' Second Prior Positions by Type of Institution	17
Table 20.	Presidents' Current and Prior Positions by Type of Institution	19
Table 21.	Presidents' Current and Second Prior Positions by Type of Institution	20
Table 22.	Presidents' Marital Status by Sex and Type of Institution	24
Table 23.	Women Presidents' Current and Prior Positions by Type of Institution	26
Table 24.	Presidents' Race/Ethnicity by Type of Institution	27
Table 25.	Black Presidents' Current and Prior Positions by Type of Institution	28

List of Figures

		Page
Figure 1.	Presidents' Sex by Control of Institution	4
Figure 2.	Presidents' Race/Ethnicity by Control of Institution	6
Figure 3.	Presidents' Marital Status by Sex	9
Figure 4.	Employment of Wives by Type of Institution	10
Figure 5.	Presidents with Ph.D. Degrees by Sex and Type of Institution	12
Figure 6.	Presidents' Length of Tenure by Sex and Race/Ethnicity	21
Figure 7.	Presidents' Length of Tenure by Control and Type of Institution	21
Figure 8.	Presidents' Highest Degrees by Sex and Type of Institution	25
Figure 9.	Presidents' Prior Positions by Sex and Type of Institution	26

Highlights

This study presents a profile of the personal and educational backgrounds of college and university presidents and provides a basis for future studies. It is based on a June 1986 survey by the Center for Leadership Development of the American Council on Education (ACE), which sent questionnaires to the chief executive officers of 2,822 regionally accredited higher education institutions; 2,105 (75 percent) were returned.

The data were analyzed by race and ethnicity, sex, and institutional type to determine whether there were differences among these groups. Respondents included 200 women presidents (9.5 percent) and 144 (7 percent) minority presidents (100 Blacks, 37 Hispanics, eight Asians, three Native Americans).

Overall, the data confirmed many of the impressions widely held by observers and students of the college presidency. Also, although it was difficult to make precise comparisons with previous studies because of differences in samples and data gathered, the findings of the current study largely agreed with those of earlier research efforts. Major findings were as follows (percentages cited in the text are usually rounded to the nearest whole number):

- The typical college president was white, male, married, and 53 years old.
- The average president had served for nearly seven years. Slightly more than half the presidents had been in office for five years or less. Women and minority presidents were newer to their jobs; and a higher proportion had served for five years or less.
- Most college presidents (85 percent) were married, but women presidents were far more likely than men to be divorced or never married. While nine in 10 men college presidents were married, only slightly more than one-third of the women presidents were. Among lay presidents, more than 90 percent of the men, but just under half the women, were married at the time of the survey.
- Husbands of college presidents were twice as likely to be employed as wives.
- More than three-quarters of all presidents held doctorate degrees: 56 percent held the Ph.D. and 22 percent held the Ed.D. Women presidents were slightly more likely than men to hold the Ph.D. and community college presidents were more than three times as likely to hold the Ed.D. than their four-year counterparts.
- Most presidents had substantial administrative experience: 60 percent had held the position of president or vice president before their current presidency.
- Most career movement occurred within the same type of institution: Two-thirds of all presidents were recruited from the same or a similar type of institution. Close to one-third were recruited internally. Doctorate-granting and two-year institutions had the highest incidence of movement within their sectors.

The Study

College and university presidents, both individually and collectively, seem to be a topic of constant interest. The college president has been the subject of countless books, essays, and studies. The steady flow of presidential autobiographies contains some of the most frequently cited wisdom about both higher education and organizational leadership. They are also a source of lessons for aspiring administrators.

Presidents are a logical focus for studies of leadership in higher education; they are the most visible administrative leaders and the living symbols of their institutions. They are also the easiest academic leaders to count and track. Each institution has only one chief executive officer, who is easy to identify through a variety of publicly available listings.

Indeed, the president is the only person through whom large segments of the public may know the institution; many, even within a college or university, may not be able to identify any other campus-wide administrator.

Who our leaders are and how they attained their current positions are thus subjects of both scholarly interest and informal conversation. Established leaders have a natural interest in the company they keep; aspiring leaders are eager to figure out the steps leading up the career ladder.

Who our leaders are and how they attained their current positions are thus subjects of both scholarly interest and informal conversation.

Purpose of the Study

In 1986, the American Council on Education (ACE) Center for Leadership Development established a research program to collect and maintain an up-to-date data file on college presidents. The scope of the program is to collect baseline information on presidents of regionally accredited higher education institutions and to update the data bank annually with information on newly appointed college presidents. This process will provide an ongoing profile of current U.S. college presidents.

The profile on college presidents will answer some of the following frequently asked questions about institutional leaders:

- What is the age, sex, and educational background of the U.S. college president?

- What is the path to the presidency? What two positions did the presidents hold before assuming their presidencies? Do career paths differ in different types of institutions?
- To what extent are presidents selected from academe versus from other organizations? How many move up within their institutions, as opposed to assuming presidencies in other colleges or universities? To what extent is career movement restricted to a narrow band of similar institutions, as the conventional wisdom holds?
- What percentage of college presidents are women? What percentage are minority? What types of institutions are more likely to hire women or minority presidents? To what extent are their backgrounds and career paths similar to those of their majority counterparts?

This profile of 2,105 college presidents in 1986 provides baseline data for future updates. Thus, this study is a beginning.

This study provides a snapshot of 2,105 U.S. college presidents in 1986. While the information on this group stands alone as the only comprehensive profile of U.S. college presidents, it is also important to note that the data form a baseline for an annual update of the study that will yield insights into changes in the college presidency over time. Thus, this study is a beginning.

A Note on Previous Studies

Ideally, we should be able to place the 1986 data on a continuum, looking backward from the present to observe changes that have occurred in the presidency in the last five, 10 or 20 years. The 1986 data should provide a point of comparison with earlier studies on the presidency. Though such studies do exist, samples and methodologies are so different that it is difficult to make valid comparisons. Bolman (1965) studied 116 newly named presidents; Cohen and March (1974) studied 42; Ferrari (1970) surveyed 760. None of these studies included community college presidents. Vaughan (1986) surveyed 838 presidents of community colleges. Moore's sample (1985) includes 156 four-year and 193 two-year presidents. Findings of this study are similar to those of Moore and of Vaughan. Carbone (1981) studied 1,406 past presidents of all institutional types. Most recently, Heidrick and Struggles (1987) reported on presidents of 329 four year colleges and universities with enrollment of 1,000 students or more. Their data generally agree with those of Vaughan, Moore, and the current study.

Survey Design and Responses

The questionnaire (included as Appendix A) was sent to the chief executive officers of 2,822 regionally accredited higher education institutions in June 1986. After one follow-up mailing, 2,105 (75 percent) returned completed questionnaires. Table 1 presents the number and percentage of higher education institutions contacted and responding to the survey. Information in this and other tables is presented by National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classification using five categories of institutions: doctorate-granting universities, comprehensive universities and colleges, baccalaureate colleges, specialized institutions, and two-year colleges. The response rate in each category is very high, ranging from 97 percent for doctorate-granting universities to 61 percent for specialized institutions. Further, the distribution of responding institutions is very similar to that of 2,822 accredited institutions contacted initially.

The questionnaire used in the survey was quite simple, requesting information that generally could be found on a curriculum vitae. Indeed, to maximize the response rate, the covering letter that accompanied the questionnaire indicated that an individual on the president's staff could complete it without having to consult the president. Interestingly, however, most presidents chose to complete the survey questionnaire personally.

Although the study lacks information on one-fourth of the presidents of colleges and universities, the size of the sample and the distribution of respondents among institutional types provide a reasonably accurate profile of current chief executive officers.

Presidents of 2,822 regionally accredited institutions were surveyed; 75 percent responded.

TABLE 1

Number, Distribution, and Response Rates of Higher Education Institutions in Universe and Study Populations*

	Total Population		Survey Respondents		Response Rate
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Doctorate-granting universities	169	6.0	164	7.8	97.0
Comprehensive universities and colleges	432	15.3	359	17.1	83.1
Baccalaureate colleges	696	24.7	553	26.3	79.4
Specialized institutions	373	13.2	228	10.8	61.1
Two-year colleges	1,152	40.8	801	38.1	69.5
Total	2,822	100.0	2,105	100.1†	74.6

*All tables indicate responses by number and percentage unless otherwise noted.

†In all tables and figures, percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Personal Characteristics: Who are the Presidents?

The typical college president was white, male, married, 53 years old, and has served for five years or fewer.

- Nine in ten presidents were men.
- Women presidents were more likely than men to head baccaluareate colleges and were less likely to head doctorate-granting universities or community colleges.
- Seven percent were minority.
- There was little age difference between men and women. Hispanic and Asian presidents were slightly younger than white or Black presidents.
- Of all respondents, 85 percent of presidents were married. Among lay presidents, 93 percent of the men, but 49 percent of the women, were married.

TABLE 2

Presidents' Sex by Type of Institution

	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Doctorate-granting universities	157	8.2	7	3.5	164	7.8
Comprehensive universities and colleges	324	17.0	35	17.5	359	17.1
Baccalaureate colleges	471	25.7	82	41.0	553	26.3
Specialized institutions	213	11.2	15	7.5	228	10.8
Two-year colleges	740	38.9	61	30.5	801	38.1
Total	1,905	100.0	200	100.0	2,105	100.0

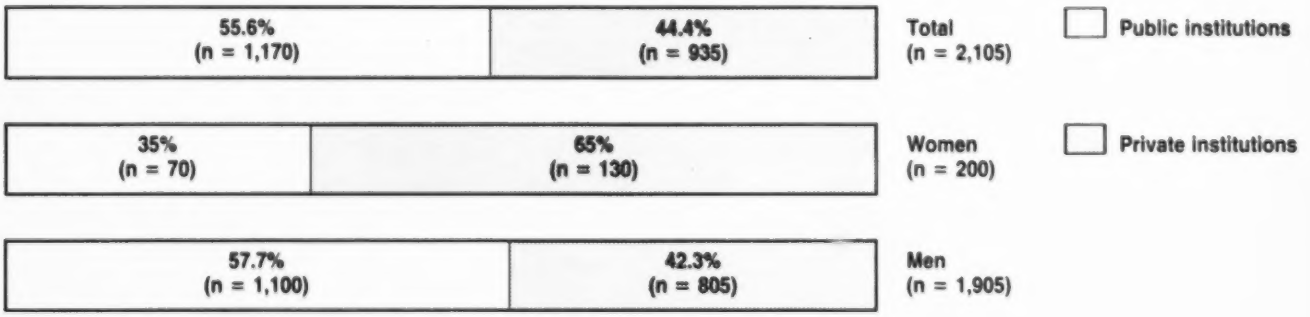
Sex

- The vast majority (90 percent) of presidents were men.

Out of 2,105 chief executive officers, only 200 (9.5 percent) were women. As Table 2 indicates, women presidents were more likely than men to head baccalaureate colleges and less than half as likely to head doctorate-granting universities. The relative prepon-

FIGURE 1

Presidents' Sex by Control of Institution
(in percentages)



derance of women in baccalaureate colleges can be explained by the fact that four out of 10 women respondents were presidents of women's colleges, the vast majority of which are baccalaureate institutions.

Women were also more likely to head private institutions (65 percent) than were men (42 percent). This finding correlates with the large proportion of private, religiously affiliated institutions headed by women (Figure 1).

Race and Ethnicity

- **The vast majority (93%) of college presidents were white.**
- **Only 2 percent of predominantly white institutions were headed by Blacks.**
- **Women and minorities were underrepresented in doctorate-granting universities.**

There were 144 presidents (7 percent) who were members of minority groups: three Native Americans, eight Asians, 37 Hispanics, 100 Blacks. Of the 37 Hispanic presidents, 14 headed institutions in Puerto Rico; two of the Asian presidents headed institutions located in U.S. territories. The largest group, Blacks, constituted only 5 percent of all higher education chief executive officers; more than half of the Black presidents (55 percent) headed historically Black institutions.

Seven percent of the men and women presidents were minority individuals, as follows: Blacks comprised 5 percent of the male presidents and 4 percent of the females; Hispanics accounted for 1.5 percent of the male presidents and 4 percent of the women presidents. The numbers of Native American presidents (three) and of Asian presidents (eight) were too small to derive meaningful percentage comparisons.

The highest proportion of minority women was among Hispanic presidents: Out of 37 Hispanic presidents, eight were women (22 percent). It also should be noted that five of the eight Hispanic women presidents were from Puerto Rico. Among 100 Blacks, seven (7 percent) were women: one Asian president was female. There were no women among the Native American respondents. Among 1,957 white presidents, 184 (9 percent) were women.

Seven percent of the presidents responding were members of minority groups; only two percent of predominantly white institutions were headed by Blacks.

TABLE 3

Presidents' Sex by Race/Ethnicity

	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Asian	7	.3	1	.5	8	.4
Black	93	4.9	7	3.5	100	4.6
White	1,773	93.1	184	92.0	1,957	93.0
Hispanic	29	1.5	8	4.0	37	1.8
Native American	3	.2	—	—	3	.1
Total	1,905	100.0	200	100.0	2,105	99.9

TABLE 4

Presidents' Race/Ethnicity by Type of Institution

	Black		White		Hispanic		Other*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Doctorate-granting universities	2	2.0	161	8.2	1	2.7	—	—
Comprehensive universities and colleges	22	22.0	329	16.8	6	16.2	2	18.0
Baccalaureate colleges	43	43.0	499	25.5	10	27.0	1	9.0
Specialized institutions	2	2.0	223	11.4	3	8.1	—	—
Two-year colleges	31	31.0	745	38.1	17	46.0	8	72.7
Total	100	100.0	1957	100.0	37	100.0	11	99.9

*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

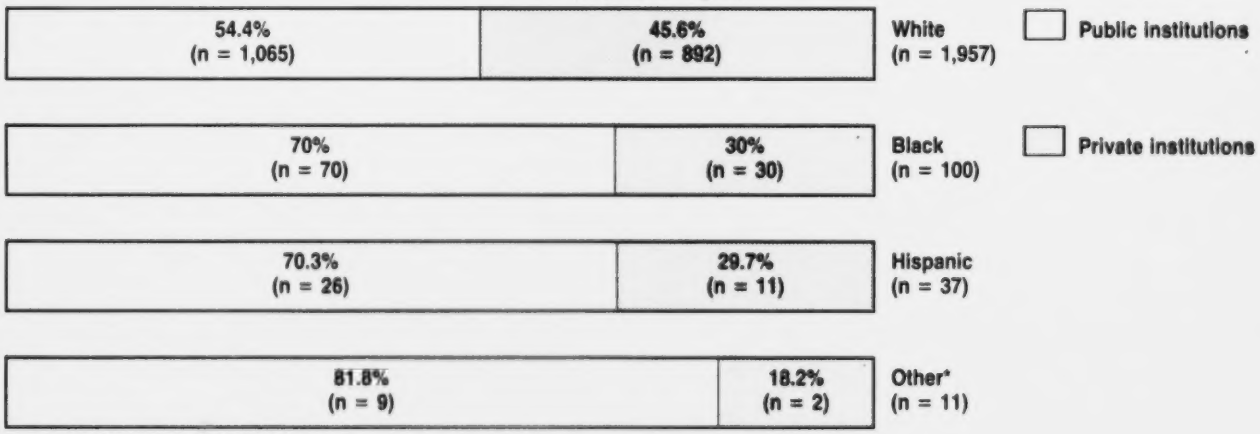
Table 4 presents the distribution of majority and minority presidents in different types of institutions. (Because of their small numbers, eight Asian and three Native American presidents are included as "other"). It shows that white presidents were more likely than others to preside over doctorate-granting universities. Close to half of the Hispanic presidents headed community colleges. Blacks were more likely than white or Hispanic presidents to head baccalaureate colleges. One explanation for this finding is the fact that the baccalaureate colleges in the study included 38 historically Black colleges.

As Figure 2 indicates, white presidents were more likely to head private institutions than Blacks or Hispanics.

FIGURE 2

Presidents' Race/Ethnicity by Control of Institution

(in percentages)



*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans.

Age

• Women were about the same age as men, and Hispanic and Asian presidents were younger.

The median age of the presidents in the study was 53 years. Only 4 percent were 31–40 years old; 36 percent were between 41–50; 45 percent were between 51–60; 14 percent were between 61–70; .4 percent were over 70. Women presidents were twice as likely to be under 40 as men (7.3 percent versus 3.7 percent).

Hispanic presidents were the youngest group. As Table 6 indicates, the median age for white and Black presidents was approximately 53, compared to 47 for Hispanics.

TABLE 5

Presidents' Median Ages by Sex

	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
31–40 years old	70	3.7	14	7.3	84	4.1
41–50 years old	677	36.0	70	36.6	747	36.1
51–60 years old	857	45.6	84	44.0	941	45.5
61–70 years old	267	14.2	22	11.5	289	14.0
71 and older	8	.4	1	.5	9	.4
Median Age	52.7		51.6		52.6	
Total responding	1,879	99.9	191	99.9	2,070	100.1

TABLE 6

Presidents' Median Ages by Race/Ethnicity

	Black		White		Hispanic		Other*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
31–40 years old	5	5.3	74	3.8	4	11.4	1	9.0
41–50 years old	32	33.7	691	35.8	20	57.1	4	36.3
51–60 years old	43	45.3	882	45.7	10	28.6	6	54.5
61–70 years old	14	14.7	274	14.2	1	2.8	0	0
71 years and older	1	1.1	8	.4	0	0	0	0
Median Age	52.7		52.6		47.4		51.3	
Total responding	95	100.1	1929	99.9	35	99.9	11	99.8

*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

Chief executive officers of doctorate-granting and comprehensive universities were slightly older than those presiding over other institutions. The median age of presidents was 55 in doctorate-granting universities and 54 in comprehensive universities and colleges, compared to 52 in baccalaureate collges and specialized institutions and 52 in community colleges.

Religion

• More than half the presidents were Protestant. Women and Hispanics were more likely to be Catholic; Blacks were more likely to be Baptists.

The religion of over half the presidents could be categorized as "Protestant" as follows: 16 percent Protestant, 13 percent Methodist, 10 percent Presbyterian, 10 percent Baptist, and 6 percent Episcopalian. In addition, 23 percent of the presidents were Roman Catholic, 3 percent Jewish, and 13 percent belonged

TABLE 7

Presidents' Religion by Sex

	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Baptist	201	10.6	7	3.5	208	9.9
Eastern Orthodox	7	0.4	1	0.5	8	0.4
Episcopalian	113	5.9	13	6.5	126	6.0
Jewish	55	2.9	8	4.0	63	3.0
Methodist	269	14.1	3	1.5	272	12.9
Presbyterian	200	10.5	17	8.5	217	10.3
Protestant	319	16.8	25	12.4	344	16.3
Roman Catholic	382	20.1	95	47.5	477	22.7
Other	257	13.5	17	8.5	274	13.0
No answer	102	5.4	14	7.0	116	5.5
Total	1,905	100.2	200	99.9	2,105	100.0

to "other" religions. (There was no religious information on 6 percent of the respondents.)

Women presidents were more likely to be Roman Catholic (48 percent) than men (20 percent). The high proportion of Catholic women presidents can be explained partially by the fact that 30 percent of all women presidents were members of religious orders.

As Table 8 indicates, the largest proportion of Baptists was among Black presidents (31 percent) and the largest proportion of Roman Catholics was among Hispanic presidents (68 percent).

TABLE 8

Presidents' Religion by Race/Ethnicity

	Black		White		Hispanic		Other*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Baptist	31	31.0	176	9.0	1	2.7	—	—
Eastern Orthodox	—	—	8	0.4	—	—	—	—
Episcopalian	10	10.0	116	6.0	—	—	—	—
Jewish	—	—	63	3.2	—	—	—	—
Methodist	19	19.0	251	12.8	—	—	2	18.2
Presbyterian	5	5.0	207	10.6	5	13.5	—	—
Protestant	11	11.0	332	17.0	—	—	1	9.1
Roman Catholic	6	6.0	443	22.6	25	67.6	3	27.2
Other	15	15.0	252	12.9	4	10.8	3	27.2
No Answer	3	3.0	109	5.6	2	5.4	2	18.2
Total	100	100.0	1,957	100.1	37	100.0	11	99.9

*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

Marital Status

Among lay presidents, 93 percent of men but 49 percent of women were married.

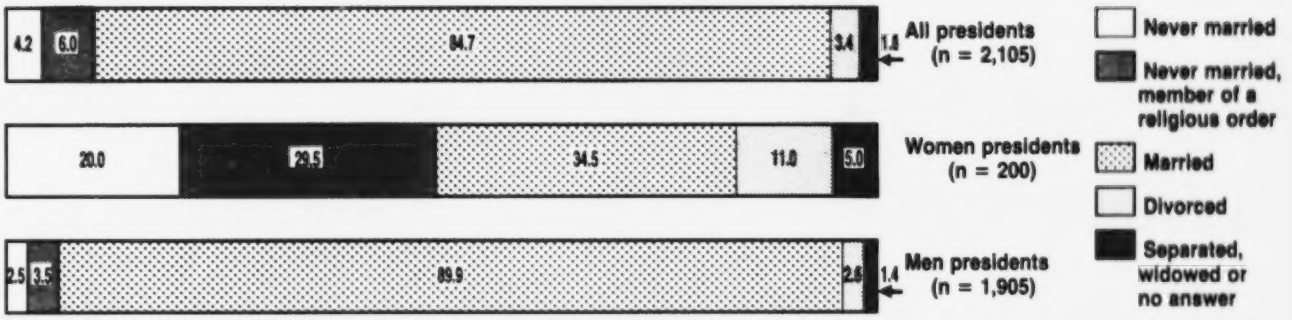
• Most college presidents were married, but women were far more likely to be divorced or never married.

The majority (85 percent) of college presidents were married at the time of the survey. Three percent were divorced, separated or widowed; 4 percent had never been married, and another 6 percent had never been married because they were members of religious orders.

While nine in 10 men college presidents were married, only slightly more than one-third (35 percent) of women were. However, when members of religious orders are excluded, the difference in marital status of men and women presidents narrows somewhat. Among the lay presidents, 93 percent of men but 49 percent of women were married. Further, women presidents were more likely to be divorced (11 percent) than were men (3 percent).

FIGURE 3

Presidents' Marital Status by Sex
(in percentages)



The minority presidents were more likely to be married than were majority presidents: 84 percent of whites, but 89 percent of Hispanics, 92 percent of Blacks, and all of Native American and Asian presidents were married.

Spouse's Employment

• Husbands of college presidents were twice as likely to be employed as wives.

Among married presidents, spouses of 47 percent were employed: 45 percent of the wives worked, as did 91 percent of the husbands.

Just under two-thirds of all employed husbands and wives worked outside the institution ("elsewhere"). Employed wives were twice as likely as employed husbands to work in the same institution as their spouses, the presidents. Employed husbands (27 percent) were almost twice as likely to be self-employed as employed wives (14 percent).

Husbands of college presidents were twice as likely to be employed as wives.

TABLE 9

Spouses' Employment Status by Sex

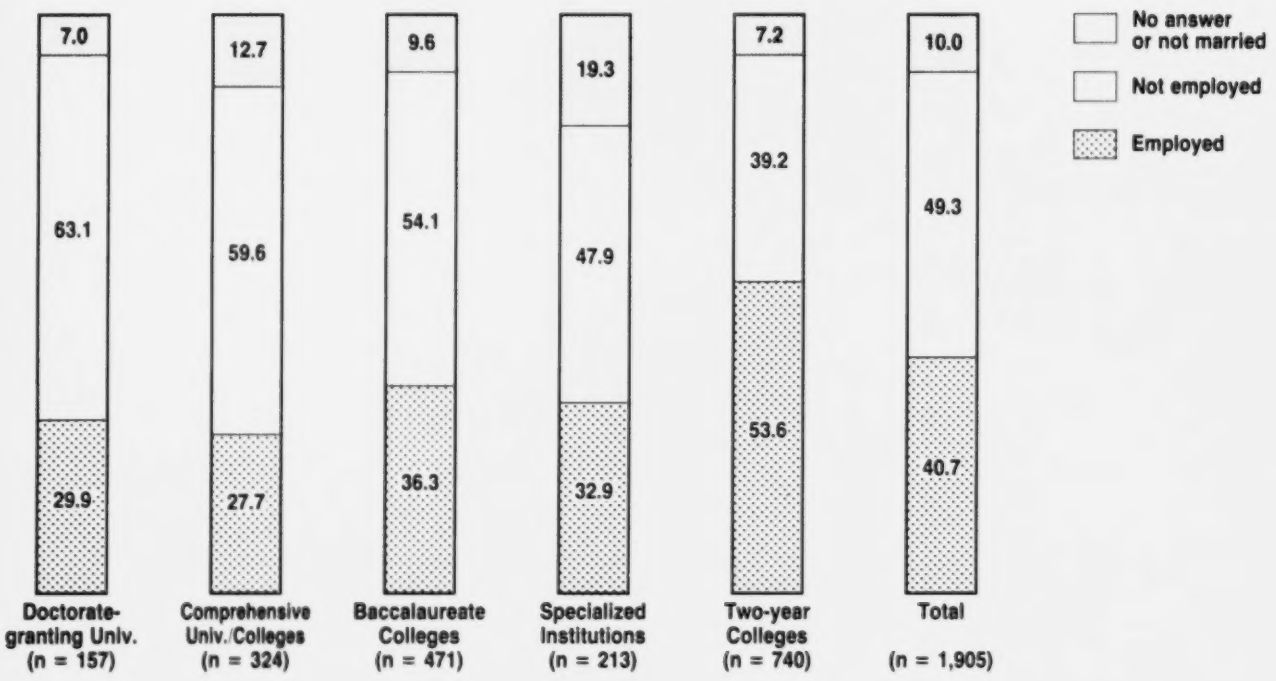
	Husbands		Wives		Total	
	No.	%*	No.	%	No.	%
Employed	63	91.3	775	45.2	838	47.0
Employed in same institution	6	9.5*	161	20.7	167	19.9
Employed elsewhere	40	63.5	504	65.0	544	64.9
Self-employed	17	27.0	110	14.2	127	15.2

*All percentages on place of employment are of *employed* spouses (n = 775 employed wives, 63 employed husbands).

As figure 4 illustrates, wives of presidents of community colleges were most likely to work (54 percent) and wives of presidents of doctorate-granting and comprehensive universities were least likely (30 percent and 28 percent respectively).

FIGURE 4

Employment of Wives by Type of Institution
(in percentages)



Academic Background

Nearly 80 percent of the presidents held doctoral degrees, with slightly more than half holding the Ph.D. degree. Women and Hispanic presidents were the most likely to hold the Ph.D. Community college presidents were far more likely than their four-year counterparts to hold the Ed.D. degree.

Highest degree

• More than half (56 percent) of the presidents held the Ph.D. and another 22 percent held the Ed.D. Women were more likely than men to hold the Ph.D.—68 percent compared to 55 percent of the men. Blacks and Hispanics also are more likely than whites to hold the Ph.D.

Nearly eight in 10 presidents responding to the survey had earned doctoral degrees, but only slightly over half (56 percent) had earned the Ph.D.; 22 percent held the Ed.D. and just over one in 10 had a master's degree.

As Table 10 indicates, 83 percent of the women and 78 percent of the men held doctoral degrees. When the type of doctoral degree is examined, some notable differences emerge between the men and the women: 68 percent of women but 55 percent of men had the Ph.D., while 23 percent of the men but only 15 percent of women had the Ed.D.

Hispanic presidents were more likely to hold the Ph.D. (68 percent) than were either white or Black presidents (56 and 58 percent respectively).

TABLE 10

Presidents' Highest Degrees by Sex

	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bachelor's degree	22	1.2	1	0.5	23	1.1
Master's degree	219	11.5	22	11.0	241	11.4
Ph.D.	1,041	54.6	136	68.2	1,177	55.9
Ed.D.	438	23.0	30	14.9	468	22.2
M.D.	41	2.2	1	0.5	42	2.0
Other health degree	7	0.4	0	—	7	0.3
Law degree	45	2.4	5	2.5	50	2.4
Other professional degree	92	4.8	5	2.5	97	4.6
Total	1,905	100.0	200	100.1	2,105	100.0

TABLE 11

Presidents' Highest Degrees by Race/Ethnicity

	Black		White		Hispanic		Other*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bachelor's degree	—	—	23	1.2	—	—	—	—
Master's degree	6	6.0	227	11.6	5	13.5	3	27.3
Ph.D.	58	58.0	1,092	55.8	25	67.6	2	18.2
Ed.D.	27	27.0	431	22.0	5	13.5	5	45.5
M.D.	—	—	42	2.2	—	—	—	—
Other health degree	—	—	7	.4	—	—	—	—
Law degree	4	4.0	45	2.3	1	2.7	—	—
Other professional degree	5	5.0	90	4.6	1	2.7	1	9.0
Total	100	100.0	1,957	100.1	37	100.0	11	100.0

*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

In every type of institution, a higher proportion of women presidents held Ph.D. degrees. Thus, in doctorate-granting universities, 81 percent of the men but all seven of the women presidents had the Ph.D. In comprehensive universities, 72 percent of the men presidents but 83 percent of the women presidents held the Ph.D. The same credential gap between men and women is seen in specialized, baccalaureate, and community colleges, as Figure 5 illustrates.

FIGURE 5

Presidents with Ph.D. Degrees by Sex and Type of Institution

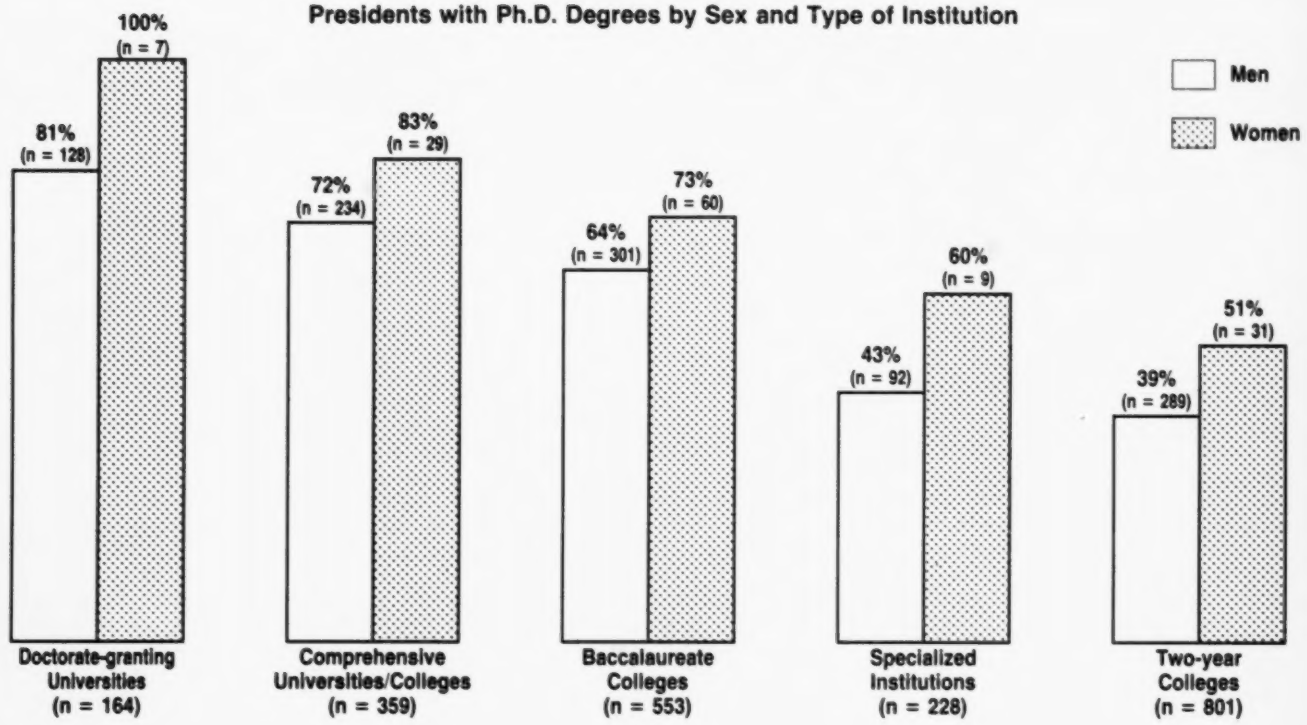


TABLE 12

Presidents' Highest Degrees by Type of Institution

	Doctorate-granting Universities		Comprehensive Universities and Colleges		Baccalaureate Colleges		Specialized Institutions		Two-year Colleges	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bachelor's degree	1	.6	2	.6	9	1.6	5	2.2	6	.8
Master's degree	3	1.8	22	6.1	49	8.9	32	14.0	135	16.9
Ph.D.	133	81.1	263	73.3	361	65.3	101	44.3	319	39.8
Ed.D.	3	1.8	47	13.1	84	15.2	17	7.5	317	39.6
M.D.	7	4.3	2	.6	2	.4	29	12.7	2	.2
Other health degree	3	1.8	—	—	—	—	4	1.8	—	—
Law degree	9	5.5	10	2.8	14	2.5	10	4.4	7	.9
Other professional degree	5	3.1	13	3.6	34	6.2	30	13.2	15	1.9
Total	164	100.0	359	100.1	553	100.1	228	100.1	801	100.1

Presidents' credentials also differed by institutional type. Not surprisingly, presidents of doctorate-granting institutions were more likely to have the Ph.D. (81 percent) than were those of comprehensive universities (73 percent), baccalaureate colleges (65 percent), or community colleges (39 percent).

Presidents in four-year and specialized institutions were far less likely to hold the Ed.D. than presidents of two-year colleges: Only 12 percent of presidents of four-year and specialized institutions held that degree, compared to 40 percent of two-year college presidents.

Field of Study

• Education is the most common field of study of college presidents.

Education led the field of presidential fields of study; 43 percent of presidents held their highest degrees in education. The humanities followed as the next most common field (16 percent), with social sciences (12 percent) third. As Table 13 shows, men were more likely to have specialized in education (43 percent) than were women presidents (37 percent). Women were twice as likely to have majored in humanities (30 percent) as were men (15 percent).

The highest proportion of presidents with education majors was among Blacks (53 percent), followed by whites (42 percent) and Hispanics (27 percent). More Hispanic presidents (24 percent) majored in the humanities than white (17 percent) or Black (5 percent) presidents.

TABLE 13

Presidents' Fields of Study by Sex

	Men		Women		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	12	0.6	0	—	12	0.6
Biological Science	40	2.1	6	3.0	46	2.2
Education	**825**	**43.3**	**73**	**36.5**	**898**	**42.7**
Engineering	38	2.0	1	0.5	39	1.8
Health Professions	3	0.2	1	0.5	4	0.2
Humanities/Fine Arts	280	14.7	60	29.8	340	16.2
Law	49	2.6	5	2.5	54	2.6
Medicine	50	2.6	1	0.5	51	2.4
Physical/Natural Science	96	5.0	11	5.5	107	5.1
Religion/Theology	163	8.6	4	2.0	167	7.9
Social Science	232	12.2	27	13.5	259	12.3
Other Professional Fields	83	4.4	7	3.5	90	4.3
No answer	34	1.8	4	2.0	38	1.8
Total	1,905	100.1	200	99.8	2,105	100.1

TABLE 14

Presidents' Fields of Study by Race/Ethnicity

	Black		White		Hispanic		Other*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	—	—	12	0.6	—	—	—	—
Biological Science	5	5.0	36	1.8	4	10.8	1	.9
Education	**53**	**53.0**	**829**	**42.4**	**10**	**27.0**	**6**	**54.5**
Engineering	1	1.0	38	2.0	—	—	—	—
Health Professions	—	—	4	0.2	—	—	—	—
Humanities/Fine Arts	5	5.0	325	16.6	9	24.3	1	.9
Law	4	4.0	50	2.6	—	—	—	—
Medicine	1	1.0	49	2.5	1	2.7	—	—
Physical/Natural Sciences	5	5.0	99	5.1	2	5.4	1	.9
Religion/Theology	4	4.0	162	8.3	1	2.7	—	—
Social Sciences	12	12.0	241	12.3	5	13.5	1	.9
Other Professional Fields	4	4.0	82	4.2	3	8.1	1	.9
No Answer	6	6.0	30	1.5	2	5.4	—	—
Total	100	100.0	1,957	100.1	37	99.9	11	99.5

*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

More sharply delineated differences in educational background emerge by institutional type. Two-year college presidents were far more likely to have education backgrounds than were presidents of other institutions. The field of study of 71 percent of the two-year college presidents was education, compared to 25 percent of presidents of four-year and specialized institutions. This finding is highlighted in Table 15 below.

TABLE 15

Presidents' Fields of Study by Type of Institution

	Doctorate-granting Universities		Comprehensive Universities and Colleges		Baccalaureate Colleges		Specialized Institutions		Two-year Colleges	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	5	3.1	2	0.6	1	0.2	—	—	4	0.5
Biological Science	8	4.9	12	3.3	11	2.0	—	—	15	1.9
Education	**11**	**6.7**	**91**	**25.4**	**181**	**32.7**	**45**	**19.7**	**570**	**71.2**
Engineering	5	3.1	9	2.5	5	0.9	10	4.4	10	1.2
Health Professions	2	1.2	1	0.3	—	—	1	0.4	—	—
Humanities	32	19.5	85	23.7	129	23.3	27	11.8	67	8.4
Law	10	6.1	11	3.1	14	2.5	13	5.7	6	0.8
Medicine	8	4.9	3	0.8	3	0.5	35	15.4	2	0.2
Physical/Natural Sciences	22	13.4	32	8.9	30	5.4	8	3.5	15	1.9
Religion/Theology	5	3.1	22	6.1	72	13.0	49	21.5	19	2.4
Social Sciences	44	26.8	72	20.1	75	13.6	14	6.1	54	6.7
Other Professional Degree	10	6.1	14	3.9	20	3.6	20	8.8	26	3.2
No Answer	2	1.2	5	1.4	12	2.2	6	2.6	13	1.6
Total	164	100.1	359	100.1	553	99.9	228	99.9	801	100.0

The field of study of 71 percent of the two-year college presidents was education, compared to 25 percent of presidents of four-year and specialized institutions.

Career Paths: Routes to the Presidency

First Position Before the Presidency

- **The route to the presidency is incremental: 17 percent of all presidents were recruited from other presidencies, 42 percent were recruited from vice presidencies.**
- **Men were more than twice as likely as women to have been recruited from another presidency (18 percent versus 8 percent).**
- **Presidents of doctorate-granting universities were nearly twice as likely as other presidents to have been recruited from another presidency (31 percent versus 17 percent of all presidents).**

Respondents were asked about the first and second jobs they held before becoming presidents. As Table 16 indicates, 17 percent of all presidents came from other presidencies; 42 percent served as vice presidents just before their current positions; the largest single group of vice presidents were vice presidents for academic affairs. This position was held by 23 percent of all presidents just prior to their presidencies, and 26 percent of the women (compared to 22 percent of the men). Only 8 percent came from faculty/research positions. Almost 9 percent came from K-12 positions or positions outside of academe.

The route to the presidency is incremental; 59 percent of all presidents served as presidents or vice presidents just prior to assuming their current position.

TABLE 16

Presidents' Prior Positions by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

	Prior Position															
	President		V.P.[1]		Dean/ Director[2]		Faculty/ Chair		K-12		Outside Academe		Other		No Response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All Presidents (n = 2,105)	361	17.1	880	41.8	390	18.5	169	8.0	48	2.3	136	6.5	110	5.2	11	.5
Men (n = 1,905)	345	18.1	795	41.7	345	18.1	142	7.5	43	2.3	126	6.6	10	.5	99	5.2
Women (n = 200)	16	8.0	85	42.5	45	22.5	27	13.5	5	2.5	10	5.0	1	.5	11	5.5
Black (n = 100)	20	20.0	37	37.0	18	18.0	10	10.0	3	3.0	2	2.0	10	10.0	—	—
White (n = 1,957)	333	17.0	826	42.3	359	18.3	152	7.8	45	2.3	132	6.8	100	5.1	10	.5
Hispanic (n = 37)	7	18.9	14	37.8	9	24.3	6	16.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2.7
Other* (n = 11)	1	9.1	3	27.2	4	36.3	1	9.1	—	—	2	18.1	—	—	—	—

*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

[1]Includes Senior or Executive Vice President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, other Vice President, Assistant or Associate Vice President

[2]Includes Dean, Director, Assistant/Associate Dean, Director of Student Services

The path to the presidency was similar for men and women, but women presidents were less than half as likely to have moved into their current position from another presidency.

The stepping stone to the presidency is similar for women and men. However, women were less likely to have been recruited from a presidency at another institution than were men: 8 percent of women presidents served as chief executive officers at other institutions, compared to 18 percent of men. Women were, however, more likely than men to have come from faculty or research positions.

Only a few differences emerge when comparing presidents' recent prior positions by race and ethnicity: Hispanics were more likely than Blacks or whites to be recruited from deanships (24 percent versus 18 percent for whites and Blacks) and from faculty or department chair positions (16 percent of Hispanics, compared with 10 percent of Black presidents and 8 percent of white presidents).

Table 17 illustrates some striking differences in presidential selection among different institutional types. Fully 31 percent of presidents in doctorate-granting institutions came from other presidencies, compared to 17 percent for all presidents. In general, university presidents had the most administrative experience; nearly six in 10 had served in a vice presidency or presidency before assuming their current positions.

TABLE 17

Presidents' Prior Positions by Type of Institution

	Prior Position															
	President		V.P.[1]		Dean/ Director[2]		Faculty/ Chair		K-12		Outside Academe		Other		No Response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All Presidents (n = 2,105)	361	17.2	880	41.8	390	18.5	169	8.0	48	2.3	136	6.5	110	5.2	11	.5
Doctorate-granting (n = 164)	51	31.1	60	36.6	26	15.9	7	4.3	—	—	8	4.9	11	6.7	1	.6
Comprehensive (n = 359)	67	18.7	166	46.2	51	14.2	23	6.4	7	2.0	22	6.1	21	5.9	2	.6
Baccalaureate (n = 553)	77	13.9	233	42.1	99	17.9	60	10.8	8	1.5	41	7.4	34	6.1	1	.2
Specialized (n = 228)	30	13.2	56	24.5	55	24.1	38	16.7	—	—	37	16.2	9	3.9	3	1.3
Two-year (n = 801)	136	17.0	365	45.6	159	19.9	41	5.1	33	4.1	28	3.4	35	4.4	4	.5

[1]Includes Senior or Executive Vice President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, other Vice President, Assistant or Associate Vice President

[2]Includes Dean, Director, Assistant/Associate Dean, Director of Student Services

Second Position Before Presidency

• Nearly 6 percent of all presidents served as presidents twice before, but close to 10 percent of the presidents of doctorate-granting universities had done so.

While six in 10 presidents came to the presidency immediately from other senior administrative positions, only three in 10 held such top positions two jobs before the presidency. Nearly 6 percent of presidents were in their third presidencies; 22 percent had served as vice presidents two positions prior, 28 percent had served as deans, and 21 percent as faculty or chairs.

Women were less likely to be in their third presidencies (3 percent versus 6 percent of the men), but more likely to have been faculty or chairs (30 percent compared to 20 percent of the men).

TABLE 18

Presidents' Second Prior Positions by Sex and Race/Ethnicity

	Second Prior Position															
	President		V.P.[1]		Dean/ Director[2]		Faculty/ Chair		K-12		Outside Academe		Other		No Response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All Presidents (n = 2,105)	119	5.7	466	22.1	590	28.0	439	20.9	109	5.2	193	9.2	154	7.3	35	1.7
Men (n = 1,905)	114	6.0	427	22.4	539	28.3	380	19.9	99	5.2	175	9.2	138	7.2	33	1.7
Women (n = 200)	5	2.5	39	19.5	51	25.5	59	29.5	10	5.0	18	9.0	16	8.0	2	1.0
Black (n = 100)	5	5.0	31	31.0	23	23.0	22	22.0	5	5.0	6	6.0	6	6.0	2	2.0
White (n = 1,957)	112	5.7	420	21.5	557	28.5	406	20.7	101	5.2	185	9.5	145	7.4	31	1.6
Hispanic (n = 37)	2	5.4	12	32.4	8	21.6	8	21.6	—	—	2	5.4	3	8.1	2	5.4
Other* (n = 11)	—	—	3	27.3	2	18.1	3	27.3	3	27.3	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

[1]Includes Senior or Executive Vice President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, other Vice President, Assistant or Associate Vice President

[2]Includes Dean, Director, Assistant/Associate Dean, Director of Student Services

Presidents from doctorate-granting universities were the most likely to be serving their third presidency (10 percent of the presidents of doctorate-granting universities had been presidents twice before, compared with 6 percent of all presidents).

TABLE 19

Presidents' Second Prior Positions by Type of Institution

	Second Prior Position															
	President		V.P.[1]		Dean/ Director[2]		Faculty/ Chair		K-12		Outside Academe		Other		No Response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All Presidents (n = 2,105)	119	5.7	466	22.1	590	28.0	439	20.9	109	5.2	193	9.2	154	7.3	35	1.7
Doctorate-granting (n = 164)	16	9.8	35	21.3	51	31.1	38	23.1	—	—	10	6.1	12	7.3	2	1.2
Comprehensive (n = 359)	15	4.2	100	27.9	103	28.7	73	20.3	8	2.2	21	5.8	34	9.5	5	1.4
Baccalaureate (n = 553)	23	4.2	118	21.3	129	23.3	146	26.4	25	4.5	55	10.0	50	9.0	7	1.3
Specialized (n = 228)	10	4.4	27	11.8	51	22.4	59	25.9	5	2.2	52	22.8	14	6.1	10	4.4
Two-year (n = 801)	55	6.9	106	23.2	256	32.0	113	15.4	71	8.9	55	6.9	44	5.5	11	1.4

[1]Includes Senior or Executive Vice President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, other Vice President, Assistant or Associate Vice President

[2]Includes Dean, Director, Assistant/Associate Dean, Director of Student Services

Institutional mobility

- **More than two-thirds of all presidents were recruited from the same or similar institutions. More than three-fourths of all presidents of doctorate-granting universities and 82 percent of two-year college presidents served at the same or similar institutions in their previous positions.**
- **Close to one-third (32 percent) of all presidents were internal candidates. Another 36 percent came from the same type of institution.**
- **Presidents of specialized institutions had the highest likelihood of having been recruited internally.**
- **There was limited mobility among the sectors.**

Mobility among types of institutions was very limited; 68 percent of presidents came from the same institution or a similar one.

When the institutional affiliation of first position before the presidency was compared with the current position, three patterns became clear.

First, there was a substantial level of internal upward mobility. About one-third (32 percent) of the presidents moved from positions within the institutions they were serving. The likelihood of having been selected internally was highest for presidents of specialized institutions (40 percent), followed by doctorate-granting universities (33 percent), comprehensive universities and colleges (31 percent), and two-year colleges (31 percent), and baccalaureate colleges (30 percent).

The second pattern reveals a high degree of movement from similar institutions. Of all presidents, 36 percent were recruited from a similar type of institutions.; 50 percent of community college presidents came from other two-year institutions; 43 percent of presidents of doctorate-granting universities came from other doctorate-granting universities. Similarly, 32 percent of presidents of comprehensive universities and colleges came from similar institutions and 25 percent of baccalaureate institution presidents came from similar colleges.

This data bears out the conventional wisdom of movement within the same type of institution: 68 percent of all presidents came from the same or similar type of institution. The likelihood of presidents remaining in the same type of institution was highest for heads of community colleges and doctorate-granting universities: 82 percent of community college presidents held their previous positions in that sector, compared to 76 percent of the presidents of doctorate-granting universities, 62 percent of the presidents of

comprehensive colleges and universities, 55 percent and 57 percent, respectively, of heads of baccalaureate and specialized institutions.

Third, career patterns show restricted mobility across sectors: 22 percent of presidents of comprehensive colleges and universities came from doctorate-granting universities, compared to 13 percent from baccalaureate institutions. In baccalaureate institutions, 36 percent of the presidents came from doctorate-granting universities or comprehensive universities, but only 4 percent moved from two-year colleges.

Similar patterns were visible in comparisons between the location of the second prior position and the current position. The likelihood of presidents of doctorate-granting universities having held a position in the same or similar institution was the highest of all groups: 83 percent did, compared to 73 percent of the community college presidents, 55 percent of the presidents of comprehensive colleges and universities, 52 percent of the baccalureate college presidents, and 42 percent of the heads of specialized institutions.

TABLE 20

Presidents' Current and Prior Positions by Type of Institution

Prior Position	Current Position									
	Doctorate-granting University		Comprehensive University or College		Baccalaureate College		Specialized Institution		Two-year College	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Same doctorate-granting university	45	33.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other doctorate-granting university	58	42.6	64	21.5	69	15.1	34	20.5	41	6.3
Same comprehensive college or university	—	—	91	30.5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other comprehensive college or university	21	15.4	94	31.5	95	20.8	16	9.6	48	7.4
Same baccalaureate college	—	—	—	—	136	29.8	—	—	—	—
Other baccalaureate college	9	6.6	38	12.8	116	25.4	15	9.0	27	4.1
Same specialized institution	—	—	—	—	—	—	66	39.8	—	—
Other specialized institution	3	2.2	5	1.7	22	4.8	28	16.9	5	0.8
Same two-year college	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	204	31.4
Other two-year college	—	—	6	2.0	18	4.0	7	4.2	328	50.1
Total	136	99.9	298	100.0	456	99.9	166	100.0	653	100.0

TABLE 21

Presidents' Current and Second Prior Positions by Type of Institution

Second Prior Position	Current Position									
	Doctorate-granting University		Comprehensive University or College		Baccalaureate College		Specialized Institution		Two-year College	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Same doctorate-granting university	35	25.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other doctorate-granting university	79	57.2	91	31.4	69	16.5	36	26.7	50	8.9
Same comprehensive college or university	—	—	69	23.8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other comprehensive college or university	17	12.3	89	30.7	93	22.2	13	9.6	61	10.9
Same baccalaureate college	—	—	—	—	106	25.3	—	—	—	—
Other baccalaureate college	5	3.6	29	10.0	113	27.0	18	13.3	33	5.9
Same specialized institution	—	—	—	—	—	—	37	27.4	—	—
Other specialized institution	2	1.4	7	2.4	20	4.8	20	14.8	7	1.2
Same two-year college	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	131	23.3
Other two-year college	—	—	5	1.7	18	4.3	11	8.1	280	49.8
Total	138	99.9	290	100.0	419	100.1	135	99.9	562	100.0

Length of Tenure

• Slightly more than half (53 percent) of presidents had served for five years or fewer. Women and minority presidents were newer to their jobs: 61 percent of the women, 84 percent of the Hispanics, and 69 percent of the Black presidents had served five years or fewer.

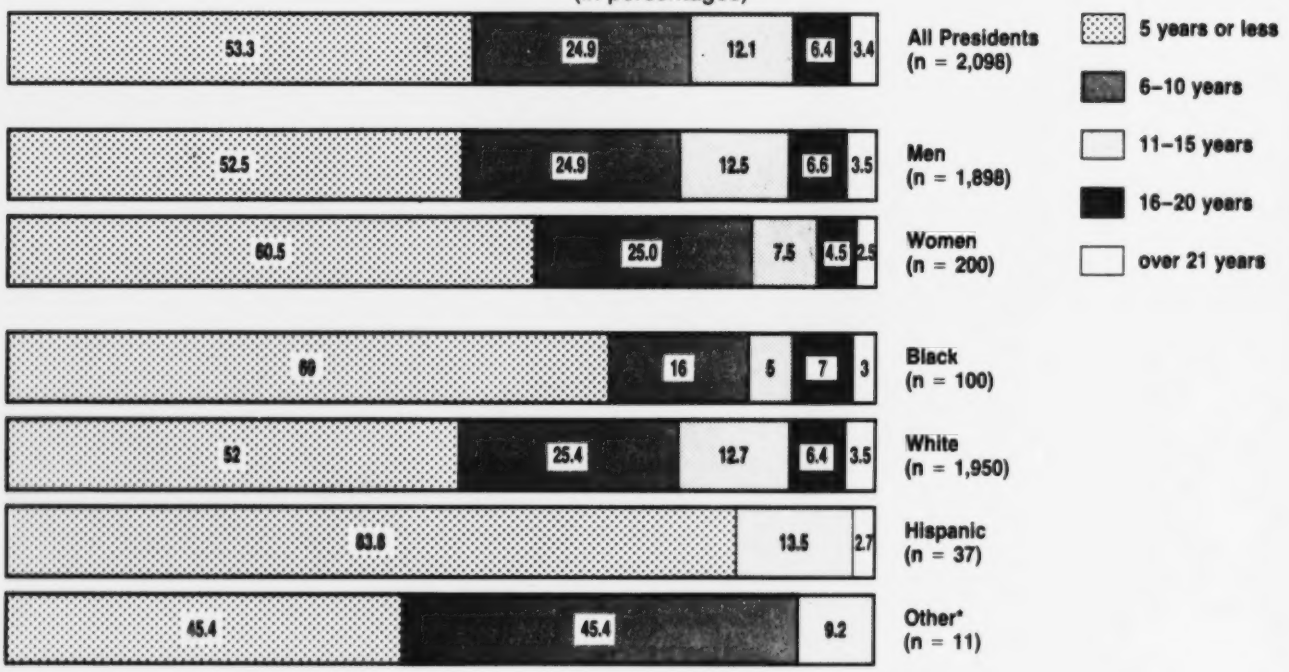
As Figure 6 illustrates, 25 percent of the presidents had been in office six–10 years, 12 percent 11–15 years, 6 percent 15–20 years, and 3 percent more than 20 years.

Women and minority presidents were the newest arrivals to the presidency: 61 percent of the women presidents but 53 percent of the men had been appointed during the past five years. Similarly, 52 percent of the white presidents, but 84 percent of the Hispanics and 69 percent of the Blacks, had been appointed in the last five years.

Figure 7 indicates that there was a slightly higher proportion of presidents in public institutions who had served five years or fewer and that among the various institutional types, the largest group of new appointments was in specialized institutions.

FIGURE 6

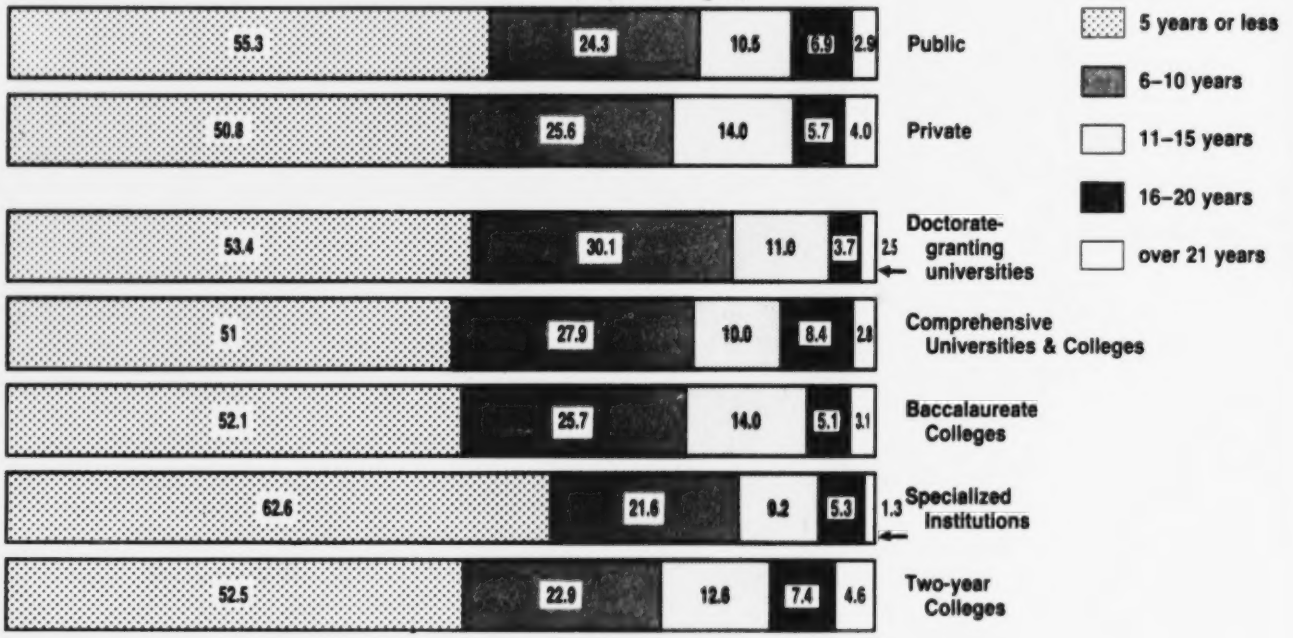
Presidents' Length of Tenure by Sex and Race/Ethnicity
(in percentages)



*Includes 8 Asians and 3 Native Americans

FIGURE 7

Presidents' Length of Tenure by Control and Type of Institution
(in percentages)



Presidents and the Board

Nearly three-fourths of the presidents reported to the chair of the board; less than half had full voting power.

• The majority (74 percent) of presidents reported to the chair of the board of trustees and were also members of the board. Less than half (44 percent) had full voting power.

The majority of respondents (87 percent) had the title of "president," while 6 percent were called "chancellors" and the remaining had other titles. Nine respondents said they were acting presidents. The title "chancellor" was used more frequently in public (11 percent) than in private (1 percent) institutions.

Reporting systems varied somewhat; 20 percent of the presidents reported to another chief executive officer, while 74 percent reported to the chair of the board of trustees or regents and 3 percent to "other" groups. Of the 61 presidents who reported to "other," most reported to a senior vice-president, some to state system commissions, and a few to governing boards, military officials, or religious groups.

Of 1,574 presidents reporting to the board of trustees or regents, only 27 percent were not members of the board. Among 1,155 presidents who were board members, 44 percent had full voting power, 43 percent were ex-officio with no voting privileges, 6 percent served as secretary of the board, and 6 percent served in "other" capacities.

Summary Profile of Women Presidents

The average woman president was white, 53 years old, held a Ph.D. degree, and was most likely to have specialized in education or the humanities.

- **The typical woman college president did not differ significantly from her male counterpart in background or career path. A notable exception, as indicated earlier, was in marital status: Only slightly more than one-third of all women presidents were married (compared to 90 percent of all men) and 49 percent of lay presidents are married, compared to 93 percent of the lay men.**

Nearly four in ten women presidents headed women's colleges.

- **Of the women presidents, 41 percent headed baccalaureate institutions; 31 percent headed two-year colleges. Only seven women (4 percent) headed doctorate-granting universities.**
- **There were 76 (38 percent) women presidents heading women's colleges[1] and 124 (62 percent) heading coeducational institutions.**
- **Thirty percent of the women presidents were members of a religious order.**

Coeducational Institutions and Women's Colleges

The average woman president of a women's college was white, unmarried, and had slightly less administrative experience than her counterpart in a coeducational institution.

Women presidents of women's colleges were less likely to have served as presidents or vice presidents in their prior position than women presidents of coeducational institutions.

- **Women heading women's colleges were more likely to be white than those heading coeducational institutions.**
- **Women heading women's colleges were far less likely to be married than women presidents of coeducational institutions; 18 percent versus 44 percent.**
- **Presidents of women's colleges were less likely to come from other presidencies and more likely to come from deanships.**

Race and ethnicity: All the women presidents of women's colleges were white, as were 87 percent of the

[1] "Women's college" is defined here as an institution described as "primarily for women" in *1986-87 Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education* (American Council on Education, 1987) or as having an undergraduate enrollment of at least 85 percent women.

women presidents of coeducational institutions. The minority women presidents of coeducational institutions included seven Blacks, eight Hispanics, and one Asian.

Marital status: Presidents of coeducational institutions were more likely to be married than women heading women's colleges: 44 percent of the women presidents of coeducational institutions were married, compared to 18 percent of the women heading women's colleges. About half (49 percent) the lay women were married, compared to 93 percent of the lay men.

TABLE 22

Presidents' Marital Status by Sex and Type of Institution

(in percentages)

	Women's Colleges (Women Presidents) (n = 76)	Coeducational Institutions (Women Presidents) (n = 124)	Lay Women Presidents (n = 141)	All Women Presidents (n = 200)	All Men Presidents (n = 1,905)
Currently married	18.4	44.4	48.9	34.5	89.9
Never married	14.5*	29.0*	28.4	20.0	2.5*

*Includes only lay persons.

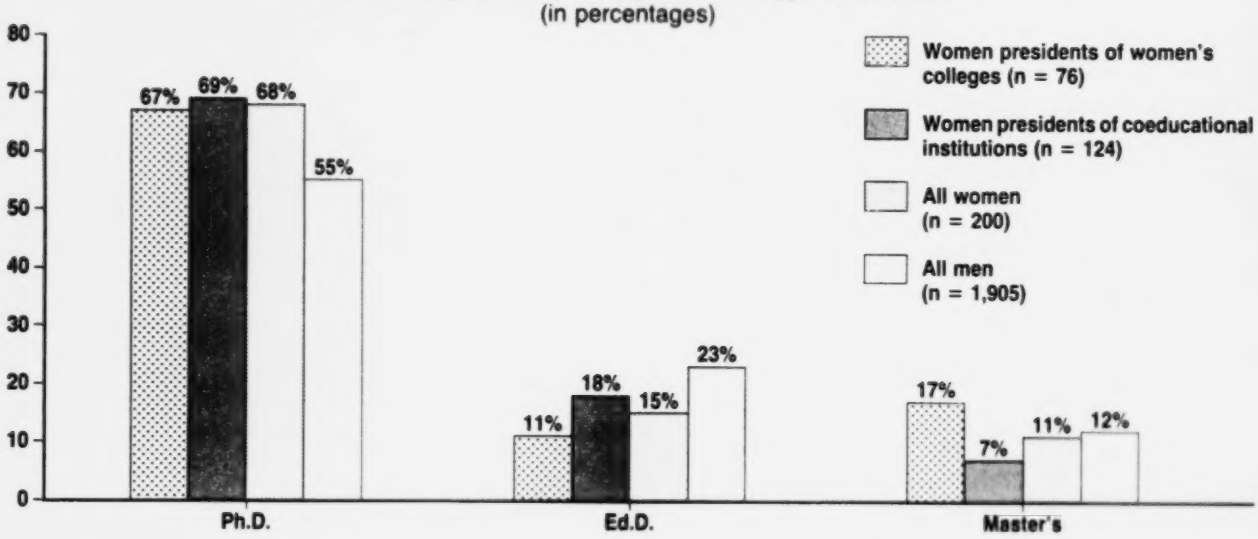
Highest degree: **Women heading coeducational institutions and women's colleges had roughly the same credentials. Women presidents of coed institutions were more likely than those heading women's colleges to hold the Ed.D. and less likely to hold the master's degree as their highest degree.**

As Figure 8 shows, women presidents of coeducational institutions and women's colleges were nearly equally likely to hold the Ph.D. (69 percent and 67 percent, respectively). More women who headed women's colleges (17 percent) had the Master's degree as their highest degree than presidents of coeducational institutions (7 percent) while the reverse was true for the Ed.D. degree (18 percent of women heading coed colleges, but 11 percent of women heading women's colleges). These figures compare to 55 percent of all male presidents holding the Ph.D. as their highest degree, 23 percent holding the Ed.D., and 12 percent holding the Master's.

FIGURE 8

Presidents' Highest Degrees by Sex and Type of Institution

(in percentages)



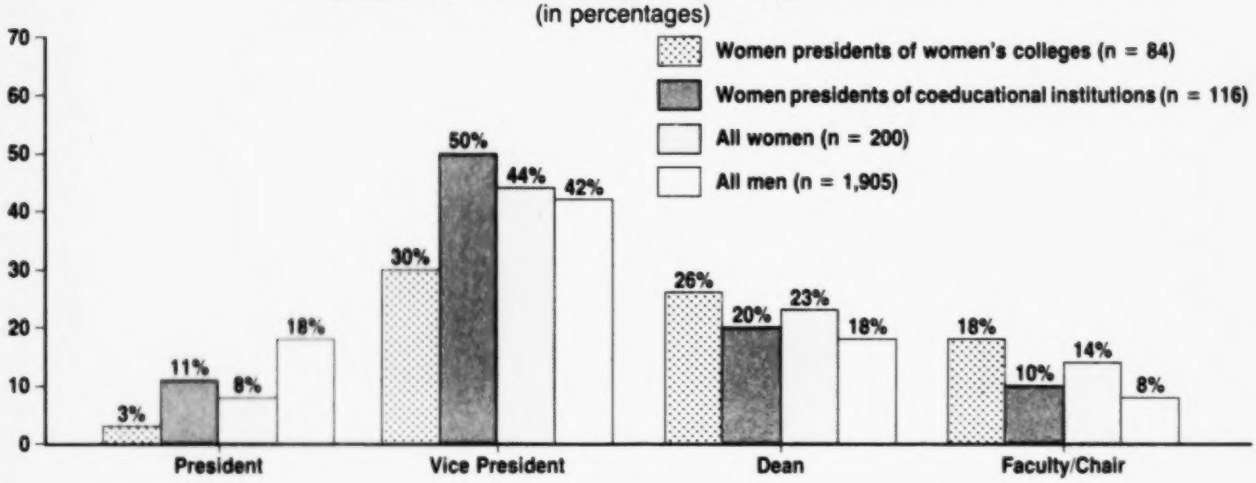
Career paths: **Women heading coeducatonal institutions had more administrative experience than those heading women's colleges. Women presidents of women's institutions were less likely to be recruited from other presidencies or vice presidencies and more likely to have served as deans or faculty members just before the presidency.**

As Figure 9 shows, the route to the presidency of a coeducational institution is somewhat different from that to a women's college presidency: 61 percent of women presidents of coeducational institutions came from presidencies or vice presidencies, compared to 33 percent of women heading women's institutions. Women heading coeducational institutions were much more likely to have been recruited from other presidencies (11 percent) than women presidents of women's colleges (3 percent). These figures compare to 18 percent of men who are recruited from other presidencies. Women presidents of coeducational institutions were twice as likely to have been recruited from vice presidencies as the presidents of women's colleges (50 percent versus 30 percent). Women presidents of women's colleges were also more likely to come from the faculty or department chair positions (18 percent, compared to 10 percent of women heading coeducational institutions and 7.5 percent of the men).

FIGURE 9

Presidents' Prior Positions by Sex and Type of Institution

(in percentages)



Institutional mobility: Women presidents of coeducational institutions were most likely to have held their previous positions in similar institutions: 90 percent came from the same or another coeducational institution. This figure compares to 53 percent of women presidents of women's colleges who held their previous positions in the same or another women's institution.

Looking at the relatively restricted movement of presidents among the various institutional types (e.g., two-year, doctorate-granting), movement between women's and coeducational institutions also is limited. There is a high degree of internal promotion to the position of president of a women's college: 42 percent of the women CEOs of women's colleges were internal candidates, compared to 36 percent of women presidents of coeducational institutions. A move from a coeducational institution to a women's college is more likely than a move the other way. Nearly half the presidents of women's colleges came from other kinds of institutions or organizations, compared to less than 10 percent of the women presidents of coeducational institutions.

TABLE 23

Women Presidents' Current and Prior Positions by Type of Institution

Prior Position	Current Position: President of Coeducational Institution		Current Position: President of Women's College	
	No.	%	No.	%
Same coeducational institution	45	36.3	—	—
Other coeducational institution	67	54.0	26	34.2
Same women's college	—	—	32	42.1
Other women's college	2	1.6	8	10.5
Other organization or institution	10	8.1	10	13.2
Total	124	100.0	76	100.0

Summary Profile of Black Presidents

• The average Black president was 53.6 years old, married, with a Ph.D. and study in the field of education. In general, the backgrounds of the Black presidents were very similar to that of white presidents.

Compared to white presidents, Black presidents were less likely to head doctorate-granting universities, specialized institutions, or two-year colleges, and more likely to head baccalaureate colleges or comprehensive universities. The distribution of Black and white presidents among institutional types is described in Table 24 .

TABLE 24

Presidents' Race/Ethnicity by Type of Institution

	Black		White	
	No.	%	No.	%
Doctorate-granting university	2	2.0	161	8.2
Comprehensive university or college	22	22.0	329	16.8
Baccalaureate college	43	43.0	499	25.5
Specialized institution	2	2.0	223	11.4
Two-year college	31	31.0	745	38.1
Total	100	100.0	1,957	100.0

Predominantly White Institutions and Historically or Predominantly Black Institutions

Of the 100 Black presidents responding to the survey, 53 headed predominantly or historically Black institutions. Only one of the 53 was a woman. The universe of historically or predominantly Black institutions is 117 (according to the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education). Therefore, the response rate of 45 percent, substantially lower than the overall response rate of 75 percent, makes the findings about Black leaders of historically or predominantly Black institutions considerably less reliable. The vast majority (53 or 96 percent) of the respondents heading predominantly or historically Black institutions were in baccalaureate or comprehensive institutions.

Personal Characteristics and Academic Background: Overall, the age, marital status and educational credentials of Black presidents in predominantly or historically Black institutions and in predominantly white institutions were comparable.

Institutional Mobility: **More than half the presidents of predominantly or historically Black institutions came from positions in predominantly white institutions.**

Twenty-eight (53 percent) of the 53 presidents of predominantly or historically Black institutions served in predominantly white institutions just before assuming the presidency; 14 (26 percent) served at other

predominantly or historically Black institutions and 11 (21 percent) were promoted internally. Looking at the institutional mobility of all presidents revealed that two-thirds came from the same or similar institutions. In comparison, less than half the presidents of predominantly or historically Black institutions came from the same institution or other predominantly or historically Black institutions.

A president was more likely to have moved from a coeducational institution to a women's college or from a predominantly white institution to a historically Black institution than the other way.

This pattern is similar to that of women presidents of coeducational institutions compared to women presidents of women's colleges. A president was more likely to have moved from a coeducational institution to a women's college or from a predominantly white institution to a historically Black institution than the other way.

There was very little movement from historically Black institutions to predominantly white institutions: only three (6 percent) of the 47 Blacks heading predominantly white institutitions had served in predominantly or historically Black institutions just before the presidency.

TABLE 25

Black Presidents' Current and Prior Positions by Type of Institution

Prior Position	Current Position			
	President of Historically Black Institution		President of Predominantly White Institution	
	No.	%	No.	%
Same historically Black college or university	11	20.8	—	—
Other historically Black college or university	14	26.4	3	6.4
Same predominantly white institution	—	—	8	17.0
Other predominantly white institution	28	52.8	36	76.6
Other organization or institution	—	—	—	—
Total	53	100.0	47	100.0

Summary and Conclusion

For the most part, the findings of this study confirm the conventional wisdom about who college presidents are and from where they come. The data offered few surprises; the profile of the "typical" college president conformed to the intuitive description that observers of higher education would offer. Among the findings of the study, the following stand out:

- The vast majority of college and university presidents are white males.
- The path to the presidency is generally incremental. Most presidents come from vice presidencies.
- There are more similarities than differences between men and women presidents, majority and minority presidents. The marital status of women presidents, however, differs significantly from that of men presidents.
- Community college presidents are far more likely than four-year presidents to hold the Ed.D. degree or have specialized in education.
- Presidents generally make career moves into the presidency of similar types of institutions. When presidents come from different kinds of institutions, they do so from a limited subset of institutional types.

For the most part, the findings of this study confirm the conventional wisdom about who college presidents are and from where they come.

Confirming the Conventional Wisdom

This validation of the conventional wisdom raises a question of why the patterns exist as they do. Why does the presidential search and selection process yield the presidents that it does? The selection process produces certain predictable results.

One predictable result is that the overwhelming majority of presidents are white, male, married, and in their early 50's. A sizable proportion of women and Black presidents head women's institutions or predominantly or historically Black institutions. The image of who shall occupy the chief executive office is clearly still a traditional one.

A second outcome of the current search process is a high degree of presumed "fit" between president and institution. This "fit" is demonstrated in two ways. First, search committees clearly favor candidates

whose experience is in similar kinds of institutions. Experience as a senior officer in a similar kind of institution is the usual preparation for the presidency. Second, certain kinds of educational credentials are deemed suitable for the various sectors. The Ph.D. seems to be a requirement for the presidency of a doctorate-granting insitutition. "Appropriate" academic credentials for the particular sector and thorough familiarity with the type of institution they now serve are also the norm.

Whatever the explanation—comfort factor, importance of good fit, wariness of considering candidates with different kinds of credentials or experiences—the result is a process that preserves the tradition. Thus, few people have the opportunity to move into a presidency from different kinds of institutions, without "appropriate" credentials or from outside the academy. The small supply of women and minority candidates who fit the traditional mold—that is, who have served as presidents or vice presidents in similar institutions, or who are full professors, reduces the obvious pool. Unless that pool is redefined, women and minorities will continue to constitute a very small percentage of chief executive officers, for the short term, at least.

The image of who shall occupy the chief executive office is clearly still a traditional one.

Affirmative action: The data do not indicate that special consideration is being given to recruiting women or minorities for presidencies. A sizable proportion of women are in single-sex colleges; the majority of Blacks are in historically or predominantly Black institutions. The higher percentage of women and Blacks holding Ph.D.s as their highest degree (traditionally the most desirable academic credential) suggests that they still need to be better qualified than their white male counterparts. Women's colleges seem to be selecting their leaders from the widest pool, that is, recruiting from the ranks of deans, department chairs, and faculty as well as from other presidencies and from vice presidencies.

The President and spouse: The president's spouse has been the subject of a great deal of attention recently. (See *Deciding Who Shall Lead,* 1986; Commission on Strengthening Presidential Leadership, 1984; Ostar, 1983 and 1986; Clodius, 1984). Most presidents are married men. Does this mean that it is more difficult to become a chief executive officer if one is a divorced or single man or a woman?

The data indicate that few women college presidents were married. Even when members of religious

orders were excluded, women were only about half as likely to be married: 93 percent of the lay men but 49 percent of the lay women were married. The data do not reveal cause and effect, of course. Is it more difficult for a married woman to become a chief executive officer? If so, why? Are family and career at the highest levels incompatible for women? Are married women less likely to be selected or less likely to want a presidency?

In many institutions, there has been an explicit or implicit expectation that presidents have wives and that the wives will devote themselves to serving the college or university. Recent discussions have centered on the question of whether institutions are getting "two for the price of one" when they hire a male president. If one assumes that non-working spouses are more likely to devote time to the institution, the data would seem to answer that question affirmatively, since 55 percent of the wives did not work, compared to 19 percent of the husbands. Employed wives were twice as likely as employed husbands to work in the same institutions as their presidential spouse.

Non-academic presidents: Some speculate that the number of presidents appointed from outside academe is on the rise. There is little comparative data available, but the current study indicates that a small minority held their previous position outside of higher education: 2 percent of presidents came from positions in K-12, and 6 percent from other positions outside of higher education. When specialized institutions are excluded from the group, however,the percentage of presidents coming from outside the academy drops to 5 percent.

Institutional mobility: The backgrounds and career paths of the presidents are fairly predictable, confirming the conventional wisdom and intuitive observations that career mobility among the institutional types is limited. Each type of institution—doctorate-granting, comprehensive, baccalaureate, specialized, and two-year—has a predominant profile, reflecting the traditions and culture of that particular sector. The data suggest that certain moves are impossible—no president moved from a community college to the presidency of a doctorate-granting university. Other moves are highly improbable—it is extemely unlikely to move from a specialized institution to the presidency of a baccalaureate college or from a baccalaureate college to a two-year institution. Institutional orbits are well-defined.

Each type of institution—doctorate-granting, comprehensive, baccalaureate, specialized, and two-year—has a predominant profile, reflecting the traditions and culture of that particular sector.

Future studies: Annual updates

Colleges and universities, as well society in general, are changing. Data gathered in future years will enable us provide comparisons between this data and to consider questions such as the following:

- Do presidents' backgrounds, educational credentials, or experiences differ from one, five, or 10 years ago?
- Is the top position in higher education more open to women and minorities? If so, in which types of institutions? Are presidents older? younger?
- Are there changes in patterns of career mobility among the various institutional types?
- Do college presidents bring different kinds of experiences to the position than in the past? Do they have different preparation? different career routes? Future studies should provide insights into these and other issues surrounding the college presidency.

References

Bolman, Frederick de W. *How College Presidents are Chosen.* Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1965.

Carbone, Robert E. *Presidential Passages.* Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1981.

Clodius, Joan E. and Diane Skomars Magrath, eds. *The President's Spouse: Volunteer or Volunteered?* Washington D.C.: National Association of State Universities and Colleges, 1984.

Cohen, Michael D. and James G. March. *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1974.

Commission on Strengthening Presidential Leadership, Clark Kerr, dir. *Presidents Make a Difference: Strengthening Leadership in Colleges and Universities.* Washington D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1984.

Deciding Who Shall Lead. Washington D.C.: American Council on Education and Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1986.

Ferrari, Michael R. *Profiles of American College Presidents.* East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1970.

Heidrick and Struggles. *The University and College President.* Heidrick and Struggles, Inc., 1987.

Moore, Kathryn. *The Top Line: A Report on Presidents', Provosts' and Deans' Careers.* Pennsylvania State University: Center For the Study of Higher Education, Report NO 85-711, n.d.

Ostar, Roberta H. *Myths and Realities: 1983 Report on the AASCU Presidential Spouses.* Washington D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1983.

Ostar, Roberta H. *The Partnership Model: A Family Perspective on the College Presidency.* Washington D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1986.

Vaughan, George B. *The Community College Presidency.* New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan Publishing Co., 1986.

The American Council on Education

NATIONAL PRESIDENTS STUDY

1. Name of Chief Executive Officer: _____

2. Exact position title: (e.g. President, Chancellor) _____

3. Date appointed to presidency: _____
   Month/Year

4. Do you hold a tenured faculty position at this time? __ Yes __ No

5. Position held immediately *prior to assuming current presidency:*

   Title: _____

   Institution: _____

   _____
   City State

   For how many years did you hold this position? _____

   Did you hold a tenured faculty position during this time? __ Yes __ No

6. Position held prior to the position described in item 5 above:

   Title: _____

   Institution: _____

   For how many years did you hold this position? _____

   Did you hold a tenured faculty position during this time? __ Yes __ No

7. Please indicate total years of full-time employment *prior to assuming current presidency:*

   ____ Years as a full-time faculty

   ____ Years as full-time administrator

   ____ Years as other in academia (specify) _____

   ____ Total years in *academic* employment (this number should be the total of the three items above)

   ____ Years in higher education although employed in non-academic position
   ____ Years outside higher education while employed in non-academic position

   ____ Total years in *non-academic* employment (this number should be the total of the two items above)

8. Please check the highest earned degree *only* and indicate major field of study:

Highest Earned Degree (please check)	Field of Study
___ Bachelors	_____
___ Masters	_____
___ Ph.D.	_____
___ Ed.D.	_____
___ Professional degree (please specify _____)	_____
____ Other (please specify _____)	_____

9. As chief executive officer, to whom do you report? (Use position title such as system head or board chair):

_____

If you report directly to a board of trustees or regents, are you a member of the board?

____ Yes, a full voting member
____ Yes, ex officio but without vote
____ Other (please specify) _____

10. Do you currently serve on any corporate, educational, governmental or community service boards? (Please check all that apply.)

____ Corporate board(s)
____ Educational organization board(s)
____ Community service board(s)
____ College or university board(s)
____ Primary/secondary school board(s)
____ Governmental elected or appointed board(s)
____ Other (please specify) _____

11. Sex: ___ Male ___ Female

12. Age: ____

13. Race/Ethnicity:
___ Asian
___ Black
___ Caucasian
___ Hispanic
___ Native American
___ Other _____
specify

14. Marital status:
    - ___ Never married
    - ___ Never married (member of religious order)
    - ___ Married
    - ___ Separated
    - ___ Divorced
    - ___ Widower/widow

    If currently married, does your spouse have paid employment?

    - ___ Yes, in same institution
    - ___ Yes, in another institution or organization
    - ___ Yes, self-employed
    - ___ No

    Is the employment ___ full-time ___ part-time?

15. Please indicate your religious preference.

    ___ Eastern Orthodox
    ___ Jewish
    ___ Roman Catholic
    ___ Presbyterian
    ___ Protestant
    ___ Baptist
    ___ Episcopal
    ___ Methodist
    ___ Other (please specify) _____

16. Are you a member of a religious order? Yes ___ No ___

    If yes, please check appropriate category.

    - ___ Priest
    - ___ Sister
    - ___ Brother
    - ___ Ordained Minister
    - ___ Rabbi
    - ___ Other (please specify) _____

17. We would greatly appreciate it if you could provide the following information about the *past* president/chief executive officer:

    Name: _____

    Title of position accepted after presidency (if retired, please indicate): _____

    _____

    Name and address of place of employment: _____

    _____

    _____

Name and title of person
completing the questionnaire: _____

_____

Telephone number: (___)-_____

Please fold in half, staple and mail. Thank you.

ACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1988

Executive Committee

Judith S. Eaton, President, Community College of Philadelphia, *Chair*

James J. Whalen, President, Ithaca College, *Vice Chair*

Frank H. T. Rhodes, President, Cornell University, *Immediate Past Chair*

Robert L. Albright, President, Johnson C. Smith University, *Secretary*

Robert H. Atwell, American Council on Education, *President*

Edward T. Foote II, President, University of Miami

Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr., Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, Maricopa Community Colleges

Hoke L. Smith, President, Towson State University

Class of 1988

Robert L. Albright, President, Johnson C. Smith University

David W. Breneman, President, Kalamazoo College

Edward T. Foote II, President, University of Miami

William P. Gerberding, President, University of Washington

Frank H. T. Rhodes, President, Cornell University

Bruce E. Whitaker, President, Chowan College

Brunetta R. Wolfman, President, Roxbury Community College

Class of 1989

Magdalen Coughlin, CSJ, President, Mount St. Mary's College

Alfredo G. de los Santos Jr., Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, Maricopa Community Colleges

Judith S. Eaton, President, Community College of Philadelphia

James O. Freedman, President, Dartmouth College

William H. Harris, President, Paine College

Stanley O. Ikenberry, President, University of Illinois

Betty Lentz Siegel, President, Kennesaw College

Class of 1990

Vera King Farris, President, Stockton State College

E. Gordon Gee, President, University of Colorado

James A. Hefner, President, Jackson State University

Anita Pampusch, President, College of St. Catherine

Donald G. Phelps, Chancellor, Seattle Community Colleges

Hoke L. Smith, President, Towson State University

Cynthia H. Tyson, President, Mary Baldwin College

James J. Whalen, President, Ithaca College

Association Representatives

Lawrence W. Tyree, Chancellor, Dallas County Community College, *American Association of Community and Junior Colleges*

Stephen Horn, President, California State University, Long Beach, *American Association of State Colleges and Universities*

James H. Daughdrill, Jr., President, Rhodes College *Association of American Colleges*

Gene A. Budig, Chancellor, University of Kansas, *Association of American Universities*

Francis J. Kerins, President, Carroll College (Montana), *Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities*

David M. Lascell, Esq., Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle, *Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges*

Michael G. Morrison, SJ, President, Creighton University, *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*

David S. Sparks, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Graduate Studies, and Research, University of Maryland, *Council of Graduate Schools*

Charles H. Oestreich, President, Texas Lutheran College, *Council of Independent Colleges*

William P. Hytche, Chancellor, University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, *National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education*

Joab M. Lesesne, Jr., President, Wofford College, *National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities*

John A. DiBiaggio, President, Michigan State University, *National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges*

Alice Gallin, OSU, Executive Director, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, *Washington Higher Education Secretariat*

4/11/88

This report was printed with the assistance of a grant from the
Marriott Corporation Education Services.

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
One Dupont Circle • Washington, D. C. 20036